

Remarks

Claims 1-34 are pending. Claims 4-7, 12, 15-17, and 20-34 are allowed. Accordingly, claims 1-3, 8-11, 13, 14, 18, and 19 are at issue.

Initially, the indication that claims 4-7, 12, 15-17 and 20-34 are allowed, and that claims 10, 11 and 19 recite allowable subject matter is noted with appreciation.

Claims 8-11 and 19 stand rejected under 35 USC §112 as indefinite.

Claim 8 is amended to clarify that the recitation of “the one of the three-point and four-point belt restraint arrangements” set forth in claim 1 is narrowed to be the three-point belt restraint arrangement with claim 8 further reciting a second three-point belt restraint arrangement. Claims 10 and 11 are amended to recite both first and second three-point belt restraint arrangements, a four-point belt restraint arrangement, and a five-point belt restraint arrangement to obviate the indefiniteness with respect thereto. Claim 19 is amended to delete the limitation directed to a buckle mechanism so that claim 19 is consistent with claim 15 from which it depends. Accordingly, it is believed that the indefiniteness rejections of claims 8-11 and 19 are obviated.

Claims 1-3, 8, 9, 13, 14 and 18 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,052,432 to Martin. Claims 1-3, 8, 9, 13, 14, and 18 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,306,044 to Tucker in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,052,432 to Martin.

The rejections, as they may apply to the claims presented herein, are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 is directed to a restraint system and recites a plurality of anchor points about the vehicle seat for seat belt webbing. Claim 1 further calls for either a three-point belt restraint arrangement or a four-point belt restraint arrangement. As amended, claim 1 states that the three-point belt restraint arrangement is formed by the seat belt webbing divided into a shoulder belt portion and a lap belt portion that both extend from one side of the seat to the other side of the seat with the divided seat belt webbing including the shoulder belt and lap belt portions extending between three of the anchor points. Amended claim 1 further states that the four-point belt restraint arrangement is formed by the seat belt webbing including the shoulder and lap belt portions with the seat belt webbing extending between four of the anchor points. Claim 1 further requires a five-point belt restraint arrangement for the occupant formed by the seat belt webbing extending

between five of the anchor points. None of the relied upon art disclose or suggest a tongue on the seat belt webbing that divides the seat belt webbing into a shoulder belt portion and a lap belt portion, as recited in amended claim 1.

More particularly, Martin is directed to an aircraft seat and has various straps each provided with their own lugs for being anchored about the seat. In this regard, Martin provides lap straps 6 and 7 that are separate from shoulder straps 18 and 19 with the lap straps 6 and 7 having respective lugs 8 and 9 at one end and terminal lugs 14 and 15 at their other ends. The shoulder straps 18 and 19 are provided with lower front end lugs 20. Thus, Martin fails to disclose or suggest a tongue carried on seat belt webbing that divides the webbing into a shoulder belt portion and a lap belt portion for either a three-point or a four-point belt restraint arrangement, as required in amended claim 1. Further, the lap straps 6 and 7 only extend to the center quick release box 16. Similarly, the shoulder straps 18 and 19 only extend down to the center quick release box 16. Thus, Martin also fail to disclose or suggest the recited shoulder and lap belt portions that extend from one side of the seat to the other side of the seat for the three-point belt restraint arrangement, as required in amended claim 1. Tucker is also directed to a completely different type of restraint system employed in off-road vehicles and racecars. As can be seen in FIG. 2 of Tucker, the shoulder straps 14 and 16 and the lap straps 20 and 22 each have their own strap lugs 46 for being connected to the center, cam release assembly 12. Thus, like Martin, Tucker does not teach a tongue on seat belt webbing that divides the webbing into a shoulder belt portion and a lap belt portion, and further does not show that any of these straps extend from one side of the seat to the other in a manner similar to the shoulder and lap belt portions of amended claim 1. Accordingly, it is believed that claim 1, and claims 2, 3, 8 and 9 which depend cognately therefrom, are allowable over the relied upon art.

Claim 13 is directed to a restraint system and calls for first and second three-point belt restraint arrangements, and a connector configured to allow the seat occupant to select the five-point belt restraint arrangement. As amended, claim 13 calls for a buckle, and a tongue on the seat belt webbing. The buckle is positioned to permit the occupant seated on the vehicle seat to releasably insert and latch the tongue into the buckle to form one of the anchor points. Amended claim 13 further calls for an actuator of the buckle that is operated by the seated occupant to release the latched tongue from the buckle. None of the relied upon art disclose or suggest a buckle having an occupant operated actuator and

tongue releasably latched therein for forming an anchor point, as recited in amended claim 13.

There are no buckles on either side of the aircraft ejection seat disclosed by Martin. Instead, Martin only disclose a slot in a flat plate of seat locks 10 and 11 through which lugs 8 and 9 are inserted for being connected to seat lock bolts 12 and 13. Martin further teaches that the seat locks are "at the lower rear part of the seat pan 2" (see col. 3, lines 50-62). As can be seen in Fig 3, these seat locks are not positioned so that an airman seated on the aircraft seat can attach the locks 8 and 9 thereto, nor do they include an actuator for being operated by the airman as does the recited buckle of amended claim 13. Tucker also fails to disclose a buckle alongside a vehicle seat. Instead, Tucker discloses hooks 124 that are connected to anchors 122 of the vehicle on either side of the seat. As shown, the anchors 122 are far different than the recited buckle as the anchor 122 of Fig 1 includes a triangular loop that is hooked by the hook member 124. No actuator similar to that recited in amended claim 13 is included on the anchor loop 122. Accordingly, it is believed that claim 13, and claims 14 and 18 which depend therefrom, are allowable over the relied upon art.

Based on the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-3, 8-11, 13, 14, 18 and 19, are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

By: /Stephen S. Favakeh/

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FITCH, EVEN, TABIN & FLANNERY
120 South LaSalle, Suite 1600
Chicago, Illinois 60603-3406
Telephone: 312/577-7000
Facsimile: 312/577-7007